

From: Alex Barnes
To: Microsoft ATR
Date: 11/16/01 8:43pm
Subject: Comments on the Proposed Microsoft Settlement

I am a computer strategy consultant, and advise large corporate clients on software technologies.

I speak here not on behalf of my firm, but as a concerned citizen.

I oppose the proposed settlement with Microsoft. The Government has already attempted to modify Microsoft's behavior with conduct remedies, and these have proved ineffective. Microsoft's behavior in bundling additional functionality into its Windows XP operating system, and in subverting open standards, indicates that the firm continues to abuse its monopoly position. This will have long-term adverse consequences not only to other software developers, but to their clients, including the large corporations that I advise. These costs and risks are passed back to the consumers, and are damaging to the US economy.

It is evident that the DOJ's settlement is a political, not legal, remedy, and that it reflects the an unstated policy of tolerating monopolistic behavior. If the Government is opposed to anti-trust law, then it should convince Congress to change the law, not subvert it through ineffectual sanctions.

A minimum acceptable settlement would require Microsoft to unbundle its applications from its operating system (OS), make public the Application Programming Interfaces (APIs) that connect these applications to the OS, and refrain from implementing proprietary extensions to US and international standard interfaces. Microsoft should have no input into the staffing of any oversight body that is chosen to monitor compliance; instead, it should be staffed based on recommendations of industry organizations that are not funded or dominated by Microsoft.

Regards,
Alex Barnes